

October 7, 2005

Patricia Murdo
Legislative Services
Montana State Capitol

Re: SJR 35 board study group

Dear Committee members:

I would request an opportunity to express my perceptions of the purpose, function, and practices of the Board of Nursing.

As a member of the Board of Nursing, a nursing educator, and a practicing registered nurse, I believe the Board of Nursing is charged with and is responsive to the concept of public health, safety, and welfare. The subtle issues that arise for board consideration are related to the practice of nursing which are intrinsically complex and reflective of the changes in the profession. These are issues that cannot be delegated to another board or set of health care providers. The role of the Board of Nursing does not focus on the needs of trade or business, but rather the interplay of nursing practice, nursing education, and patient safety. Nurses who are experts in the profession must continue to regulate nursing practice.

The membership of the Board of Nursing is appropriately staff with all levels of nursing practice: LPN, RN, APRN, and Education. In addition, there is adequate public representation to offer the membership the patient's perspective. The board staff, although fractionated into sub-departments, is intended to serve the nearly 16, 000 licensees in our state. The board staff requires a structure of communication and cohesiveness to adequately support the work of the Board.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my observations.

Sincerely,

Susan Raph, MN, RN, CNAA, BC